old and import of capital goods for pre-production and post-production facilities are permitted under the scheme. Import of spares is also permitted to facilitate upgradation of existing plant and machinery.

3. Supplies of Information Technology Agreement (ITA-1) items and notified zero duty telecom/electronic items in the Domestic Tariff Area (DTA) by EHTP/Export Oriented Unit (EOU) units are counted for the purpose of fulfilment of positive NFE.

4. 100% depreciation is available to computers and computer peripherals over a period of 3 years for all types of electronic units under EOU/EHTP/STP/SEZ schemes.

5. Special Economic Zones (SEZs) are being set up to enable hassle free manufacturing and trading for export purposes. Sales from Domestic Tariff Area (DTA) to SEZs are being treated as physical export. This entitles domestic suppliers to Drawback/DEPB benefits, CST exemption and Service Tax exemption.

6. EOU/EHTP units are eligible for Income Tax exemption on export profits, upto 2010, in terms of Sections 10Aand 10B of the Income Tax Act.

7. Threshold limit for obtaining "Export House" status reduced to Rs. 5 crores from Rs. 15 crores for Small Scale Industry, tiny sector, cottage sector, units located in North East States/Sikkim/ J&K; exporters exporting to countries in Latin America/CIS/ Sub Sahara Africa and units having ISO 9000 (Series) status. The status holders are eligible for the following new/special facilities:

* 100% retention of foreign exchange in Exchange Earners' Foreign Currency (EEFC) account;

* Enhancement in normal repatriation period from 180 days to 360 days.

Development of Simputers

1661. SHRI B.J. PANDA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that our companies have developed simputers and these are now in use in the country; and

(b) if so, the details of this latest model of computer and how far it would help us to record additional data and provide additional benefits to the users?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Simputer is a versatile hand-held data collection and processing device. Its features include colour display, Indian language support, internet connectivity, interface for printer, etc. As it is based on Open Source Software, it can be used for appropriate applications in areas such as:

- Crop data collection
- Land records
- Village information dissemination
- Agricultural Produce Marketing (APMC) auction yards
- Literacy and education
- PDS (ration-shop) inventory control
- Microcredit
- Telemedicine
- Map-based applications:
  Disaster Management
  Resource surveys
- Electricity meter reading

Simputer can also be used for sending/receiving e-mails in English as well as in Indian languages and surfing the internet. Being a handheld, battery operated device, Simputer can be used in the field where normal PCs cannot be used for want of normal electric power in places such as villages and remote areas.

Spectrum policy

1662. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state: